



2019 Annual Progress Report Implementing Recommendation 17.3 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Yeshiva College Bondi

Yeshiva College Bondi is a co-educational Jewish day school, located at 36 Flood Street, Bondi, NSW, serving students in Years K-to-10.

Yeshiva College Bondi is a separate institution from Yeshiva College. The two organisations have always been separate entities with different Directors. Yeshiva College Bondi was not mentioned in the Royal Commission’s recommendations to the National Office for Child Safety.

Students who attend Yeshiva College Bondi study the mandatory NESA Key Learning Areas, while also studying additional Jewish Studies subjects.

Policies and Procedures

Yeshiva College Bondi has policies and procedures in place for all staff and volunteers to comply with, that set behavioural standards towards children and explain reporting requirements, as well as procedures for handling of complaints regarding child sexual abuse.

All policies for the school are approved by the College Board of Directors and are implemented by management and staff at Yeshiva College Bondi. Policies are based on NESA requirements.

Yeshiva College Bondi has taken great expenses and effort to ensure that governance, risk, compliance and policy management are documented and followed. In 2019, the school hired CompliSpace to help the school review, revise, train and document training of all of its policies and procedures. CompliSpace utilises a central repository to hold all policies and procedures, track changes, and track training utilising an intranet website, training modules, and searchable policy database. This service ensures internal controls and risk management policies are optimal and compliance training is documented and followed by all staff. Use of this tool streamlines the school’s legal and regulatory compliance obligation, as it not only optimises its governance, but also makes policies easier for staff to find, follow and be trained with.

The school’s complete suite of policies and procedures have been updated. These updates and reviews have also included the school’s Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is very



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clear, ensuring that all staff and volunteers can easily understand their obligations and responsibilities and they have clear guidelines regarding when breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported. Staff trainings regarding policy implementations and changes are conducted annually, documented, and kept available in the central database, to ensure awareness and compliance by all new and existing staff. The school's complaint handling policy is child-focused and specifies protections for whistleblowers who make complaints. Whistleblower protection and protection from retaliation includes children, parents, trusted adults, independent support persons, staff members, volunteers and adult survivors.

All schools staff have been trained in the use of the new CompliSpace system. Annual training is conducted and documented in a central repository, ensuring ongoing awareness and continuity of policy implementation for new and existing staff. The school's policies are kept up to date with legal and regulatory changes. Staff are made aware of the most current policies via ongoing training conducted using the CompliSpace modules. Additional training and support is also available to the school as needed, to ensure staff have access to expert recommendations and for the school to stay abreast of best practices.

The school's policy content is published to the school intranet for all staff to access and review. Policies and procedures are available to staff via an easy to use, searchable interface. Staff have been trained in using the interface as well as in the policies of the school. Workflows have been documented and are available on the internal website, as well. This policy tracking / availability tool has ensured ease of use and accessibility of policy requirements via a seamless searchability capability of all policies to ensure staff are aware of how to handle any situation that comes up that staff may have questions on how to handle. All policy updates are version controlled, accessible and allow training documentation to be tracked.

Workflows have been implemented in the school to manage risks, assign tasks, capture incidents and reporting is easily done all via the CompliSpace tool. The school has access to a team of consultants at CompliSpace with backgrounds in law, consulting, education and regulatory compliance. These experts can answer any compliance questions arising at the school, to ensure compliance with workflows and policies, and to maintain the school's compliance with changes in regulations.

Yeshiva College reviews its **Staff Code of Conduct** and **Child Protection Policy** annually.

Key points of review in the **Staff Code of Conduct** include:

- Compliance with the Code of Conduct
- Professional Expectations
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct
- Required Reporting



- Respect for People
- Duty of Care
- Work Health and Safety
- Professional Relationships Between Employees and Students
- Appropriate use of Electronic Communication and Social Networking Sites
- Use of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco
- Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interest
- Declaring Gifts, Benefits and Bribes
- Communicating and Protecting Confidential Information
- Record Keeping
- Copyright and Intellectual Property

Key points of review in the **Child Protection Policy** include:

- Key Legislation
- Obligations to Report
- Duty of Care
- Compliance and Records
- Child Protection Concerns
- Training
- Procedures for Reporting



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- Reportable Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting
- Working With Children Checks
- Risk Management
- Grooming
- Disciplinary Actions
- Confidentiality
- Criminal Offences

Induction and Training for Staff and Volunteers

Each employee or volunteer at Yeshiva College Bondi must read the Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy and sign off to confirm their commitment to the policies and the reporting protocols prior to working at the school. All updates and changes to these policies are provided to staff and training is documented and kept in a central repository. The Code of Conduct includes definitions of the various forms of sexual abuse and grooming. It specifies what sort of behaviours are unacceptable between staff members and students.

In order to keep these issues foremost in staff awareness, re-education and training on the Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Code of Conduct, is regularly provided during Staff Professional Development days, which are scheduled for each semester and provided annually via online training modules that all staff are required to do. Topics including the appropriate questioning of children, e.g. limiting the questioning of children, asking only open-ended questions, knowing when to cease questioning and to whom staff should (immediately) report disclosures to. Staff are trained to inform the disclosing child regarding who will be notified of the disclosure and are reminded not to make promises that cannot be kept. After a disclosure, staff members need to document the conversation using the child’s words as much as possible.

Staff members always have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have with regarding the conduct of anyone in the institution to a senior staff member. They are reminded that they are welcome to ask any questions they may have to better understand the reporting process, to ensure it is understood and followed correctly.

The school records ongoing documentation of policies and procedures related to child safety standards



and holds records of Child Protection Training undertaken by staff. Child Protection Training is comprised of on-site training, online training through AIS NSW and via the CompliSpace training module. Training also includes liaising with external training providers, such as Deborah Blackman from Educare who also presents child protection sessions to the student body during school hours and to parents in evening sessions, on an annual basis.

In 2019 all staff completed the second year of an online workshop titled **NSW Reportable Conduct and Allegations Against Employees - Online Module** through AIS NSW as part of a 2-year cycle of child protection training.

In 2020 all staff will go back to the first year of the cycle and complete an online workshop titled **Obligations in Identifying and Responding to Children and Young People at Risk Online Module** through AIS NSW as part of a new 2-year cycle of child protection training.

Training for Parents/Carers

The school provides regular child protection parent workshops, from time to time, using external training providers. In 2019 the school provided parents with an internationally acclaimed workshop which was aimed at teaching parents how to protect their children from sexual abuse and guided parents on how to speak to their children regarding sexual abuse in a way that is age appropriate and not frightening to them. The workshop covered topics such as risk awareness, recognising warning signs of perpetrators, understanding the “grooming process,” minimising opportunities for abuse, and recognising signs of anxiety in children. Parents came away being more aware of the risks their children face, and empowered to keep their children safe.

Training for Students

The school engages Deborah Blackman, an external consultant from Educare, to provide protective education programs at the school for all students. These informative sessions provide students from Kindergarten up to Year 10 with child protection information and strategies for keeping themselves safe, while enabling students to have an opportunity to voice their views, concerns, and questions regarding child safety practices in the school and community.

Class teachers are also present at these sessions, strengthening the messages taught and giving the children extra support, in order to allow them to feel relaxed and comfortable speaking about these subjects, when needed. Children are encouraged to report behaviours that make them feel uncomfortable. They engage in role-play activities which open opportunities for the children to talk with a trusted adult about subjects that might otherwise be difficult for them to raise. Children are taught that telling someone is the right thing to do and if something happens to them, it is not their fault.



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Children are also made aware that Yeshiva College Bondi will take all reports seriously and that they will be treated with dignity and respect when bringing allegations to staff attention. Children feel a sense of ownership, knowing that they will participate in decisions affecting them and that they will be involved in the development of the complaint handling process and its review, as per the school’s policies.

The school strives to empower students to carry through and report any misconduct to a responsible adult. Efforts are made to reduce any barriers that children may face while seeking to make a complaint, such as power imbalance between the child and the institution, fear of being viewed as a trouble maker, etc., through the creation and training of policies and protocols to all staff providing services at Yeshiva College Bondi.

These programs will continue to be undertaken at the school, annually, as part of the school’s PDHPE programs.

Contacting Police

If Yeshiva College Bondi receives a disclosure of conduct that may constitute a criminal offence, the school’s policy is to report the allegation to the police in a timely manner. In such instances, the school works closely with the police, and consults with them on all matters regarding the incident, prior to communicating with parents, children or staff. Police input is also taken prior to conducting any steps to investigate the allegation. If the police decide not to investigate the allegation, the school would confirm that the police have no objection to the school initiating its own investigation, before taking any steps to investigate.

The safety of the child(ren) concerned, and other children at risk within the school’s responsibility is the school’s foremost objective. No matter what the police outcome, a risk assessment would thereafter be conducted to ensure the safety of all children in the school’s care and to improve risk management practices to ensure such conduct not be repeated. This assessment would occur whether or not the accused is still in employment.

Pastoral Care

Keeping students safe is the number one priority of Yeshiva College Bondi. All students at the College have a religious studies teacher and a secular studies teacher involved in their pastoral care to effectively meet their personal, social, spiritual and academic needs. The school has a dedicated team who work hard to make Yeshiva College Bondi a safe and supportive environment for its students.

Relationships between students and staff are important factors in the development and maintenance of a healthy school community and student achievement. Pastoral care at Yeshiva College Bondi is about all school staff enhancing the wellbeing of students through their relationships, interventions, learning

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experiences and environment provided.

Components of the Yeshiva College Bondi Pastoral Care Program include:

- Participating in Tzivos Hashem to promote Jewish values and ethics
- Creating a sense of belonging through team building activities, community service and peer support
- Surveying students on school improvement
- Tracking individual student progress
- Enabling early intervention in identifying and dealing with specific needs
- Celebrating students' successes and achievements
- Educating parents in watching out for risk factors and protection of their children
- Seeking external support for families and students in need
- The provision of good role models both at school and at home.

Rabbi Dr Dovid Slavin

Principal

10/02/2020